

## Conference Paper

# Contemporary Art in the Cultural Space of the Metropolis

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## Abstract


One of the most important features of modern art is its existence in the everyday urban culture and active transformation of the latter. The purpose of the article is to analyze the presence of art in the space of the modern metropolis and its influence on the culture. A special role here belongs to the current urban art practices, which turned out to be necessary for the development of Russian cities of the third millennium and their inhabitants. Using the socio-cultural and philosophical-aesthetic methodology to analyze the contemporary art in the context of urban culture, the author refers to the space of Yekaterinburg, which is a megacity of the third millennium. By way of concretization, the article addresses the results of a study of the cultural environment of the Ural capital called "Yekaterinburg Pulse", which determined the features, status and problems of the megacity.

**Keywords:** urban art practices, metropolis, language and institutions of modern art, culture space of Yekaterinburg.

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## 1. Introduction

The metropolis of the third Millennium actively includes modern art in all public spaces: art galleries, street art, graffiti, performances, flash mobs, and art installations. All these have been successfully in the mainstream of a city environment. At the beginning of each year, the website Artguide inform about new art galleries, which are to be opened in the capital cities around the world, new and ongoing festivals of contemporary art, without which the existence and development of cities is impossible.

Historically, a city has been a condition, a basis and a center of socio-cultural development, a bearer of innovations in culture and society. Its space, the aesthetic expressiveness of which was historically formed by architecture, presented the features of the cultural era. The value-humanistic content of culture was directly visualized in the urban planning, architecture, significant places and events. In the modern research, the city and urban culture are considered as a producing, creative space, like Charles Landry's "creative city" – a place where modern urban problems are solved on the basis of creative industries [5]. Sharon Zukin reveals in his study "urban cultures" and culture

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as a way of constructing urban space [4]. Finally, the city that exists as a “machine of production and consumption of culture” is represented by Lev Zaks [3]. Thus, culture is considered as an economic, ideological, spiritual resource of modern cities, and the growing city provides opportunities for the multilateral development of its citizens.

Actually, art was and is historically the direct and active participant of life of the cities. Obviously, the large-scale and radical aesthetic revolution caused by the socio-cultural modernization of the early XX century, found expression in the space of the capital cities, and then the province. The art of avant-garde and the design that was born at that time created a visualization of revolutionary transformations in the sphere of urban everyday life. The scope of aesthetic and artistic transformation of cities precisely corresponded to the scale of social transformations and contributed to their adoption by culture. Since then, the urban development has been directly linked to the presence of art and its institutions in the urban space.

## 2. Problem Statement

In the information society at the turn of XX-XXI centuries, there has been a dramatic change in the character and functioning of urban space. First of all, there has been a growth of cities, and then their “reassignment”. Cities, historically determined by the nature of the industrial production unfolding on their territory, have become centers of information flows, communication hubs, including artistic ones. Modern cities have changed their status, image and symbolic capital depending on the art festivals that are held on their territory (Venetian, Moscow, and now the Ural industrial Biennale of modern art), the emerging exhibition venues (Guggenheim Museum, created by F. Gary and glorified Spanish Bilbao, of the latter – the multifunctional cultural Yeltsin Center in Yekaterinburg).

The extensive expansion of urban space due to housing development and its visual disorder associated with the neighborhood of old and new industrial and residential buildings, attempted to organize modern art through the efforts of urban art practices. The current art practices have transformed the city space into an open aesthetically significant environment, a place of artistic events. Invading the daily life of the city center and its outskirts, street art, flash mob, art performances, art installations, and urban sculpture have changed the look of urban areas and their acceptance, and also have humanely refocused them. The recently abandoned, non-functioning factories in the center and on the outskirts have become exhibition spaces of contemporary art during art festivals, and street art and public art have accentuated the sensual and

semantic content of urban space. At the same time, there have been arisen problems for the theory of art and the practice of organizing this process.

Where are the boundaries of aesthetic and artistic transformation of space? How is modern or so-called contemporary art compatible with the scope of the metropolis and its cultural diversity? How to manage the development of art transformation in the metropolis?

### 3. Methodology

Philosophical and aesthetic analysis of contemporary art in the context of changes in its language, functions and forms, determined by the actual values of culture, must be supplemented by socio-cultural methodology.

### 4. Results

A metropolis is a city which number exceeds 1 million people, and which territory is large and of multifunctional use. Metropolises or megacities are called the highest link of urbanization, as creative initiatives in such places are implemented faster, and this is reflected in the production processes, in the development of multiculturalism, all kinds of communications, construction and architecture. Megacities are multifunctional places that combine industrial, cultural, scientific, commercial, transport and other functions. This city type concentrates a variety of cultures, ethnic groups and subcultures. It is in the conditions of the metropolis that their interaction is necessary and leads to fruitful projects. Additionally, the metropolis has a different structure: it consists of many urban formations. Yekaterinburg is a typical metropolis in this respect [6].

At the beginning of this year, the portal Culture of Yekaterinburg - posters, news, and reports - presented the results of a study of the cultural environment of the Ural capital called "Yekaterinburg pulse". The head of the research group was Eduard Boyakov, who is the producer, theater director and educator, chairman of the Russian art union, and is currently the artistic director of the Moscow Art Theater named after M. Gorky [2]. When analyzing the research, Yekaterinburg has been recognized by the experts as a developed space of culture, and, moreover, has been called "the capital of modern art", with the prospects linked to the further development of modern art in the city. Undoubtedly, this conclusion provides substantive reasons.

Aesthetic and artistic transformation of the industrial Yekaterinburg city, founded in the XVIII century as a factory city, begins with the efforts of art practices in the early

XXI century. In the fall of 2010, the 1st Ural industrial Biennale of contemporary art took place, and this event probably marked the final transformation of the cultural status and image of the city, showing the transformation of the historic city-plant in the city gallery and capital of modern art. The print shop “The Ural worker”, the workshops of the Sverdlovsk worsted plant, VIZ and Uralmash, excluded from the production turnover of the territory, were unique in their capabilities for the deployment of acting arts. There was an art transformation of Yekaterinburg, the consequence of which was the aesthetically reinterpreted historical space, and the architecture of constructivism, which formed the image-formula of the city, sounded in a new way [1, 42-48].

## 5. Conclusions

Thanks to the current art practice, the everyday life of the citizens has acquired the status of individual cultural value and turned into an environment that encourages creativity. Urban art has not only decorated the city, but also has encouraged citizens to emotionally and sensually overestimate the territory and empathize with it. The aestheticism of the daily urban environment brought the city and its inhabitants closer, thus contributing to the humanization of life in the metropolis. The language of modern art is extremely dynamic and close to the vocabulary of the everyday world, and this allows current art practices to organically integrate into all areas of the city, its streets, museums and galleries.

But the productive functioning of modern art involves such an artistic culture of the city, which is well-developed in terms of information, geography and institutions. And indeed, the new interaction of art and cultural space of the city, as it was noted in the above-mentioned analytical report, needs to be thoughtfully focused on the complicated dynamics of modern culture policy. The development of contemporary art in the space of the metropolis can be constructive only with the support of appropriate technologies of culture management. Besides, the basis of the management is not just the presence of a professional community of artistic experts, but the active interaction with local authorities. The humanitarian transformation of contemporary art into the cultural space of the metropolis becomes productive in these conditions.

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